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DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PPD, NEA/P, AND INR/R/MR

LONDON FOR TSOU

PARIS FOR ZEYA

USCENTCOM FOR PLUSH

FOREIGN PRESS CENTER FOR SILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ, PALESTINIAN UNITY, AND ISRAELI
"GAMES"

Iraq after Three Years

[1](#)1. The government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" published an editorial on March 22 under the headline "Three Years of Bloodshed in Iraq":

"Certainly the coalition forces that invaded Iraq did not anticipate the length of their stay there, having based their miscalculations on false assumptions. Although the Iraqis have been suffering for 25 years, we can describe the last three as the bloodiest and most destructive to date. Coalition forces under U.S. leadership are keen to prevent the deterioration of the situation in Iraq or the eruption of a civil war, because that will indicate the failure of the U.S. mission. America and all parties have a moral responsibility to save Iraq and to preserve its unity, for this is the true, effective path to a better future for the Iraqis."

Promoting Palestinian Unity...

[1](#)2. On March 23, another "Oman" editorial looked at "The Palestinian Process at the Crossroads":

"It seems that conflicts between the Palestinian leadership and Hamas are escalating in advance of the formation of a new government under Ismael Haniya's leadership. Palestinian national unity through cooperation is an important step, and so ongoing dialogue among President Mahmoud Abbas, Hamas leader Ismael Haniya, and all other political powers is a matter that will define the Palestinian future and its link with peace issues, as well as negotiations with Israel. Mending the Palestinian house is a prerequisite for establishing confidence that this cooperation will benefit the people."

...and Distracting Israeli Voters

[1](#)3. The privately owned daily "Al-Watan" carried an editorial on March 24 decrying "Israeli Election Games":

"As the Israeli election on March 28 approaches, anxiety is rising among Israeli officials, especially those who have put themselves forward for the Knesset or other government office. In the past, Israel's military leaders competed by demonstrating the highest level of suffering they could inflict on the Palestinians, indicating their ability to protect so-called "Israeli Security." However, the generation of military leaders has ended, and Israeli voters are faced with candidates inexperienced in military matters; as a result, the lack of enthusiasm among them is obvious. Therefore, these leaders had to create imaginary victories, such as storming the prison in Jericho, strengthening the blockade that starves the Palestinians in retaliation for electing Hamas, and encouraging other countries to withhold aid, all to restore the trust of Israeli voters."

STEWART